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Selections

for the

Piano



Suite V (French), Fifth, Sixth
and Seventh Movements

—BACH

GRADE IV—B

No. 93



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PIANO

Grade IV—B

FRENCH SUITE, No. 5.

Bourrée, Loure, Gigue.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH—JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH.

Born at Eisenach, Thuringia, March 21st, 1685.

Died at Leipsic, Saxony, July 28th, 1750.



ONE of the greatest composers of all time, and the most prominent representative of a family of famous musicians who held a distinguished position in Germany for over two hundred years. Becoming an orphan at an early age, he was turned upon the care of his older brother, Johann Christoph, who became his teacher.

At the age of fifteen he obtained a position in the choir of St. Michael's School at Luneburg, and from this time he depended upon himself. While here, besides vocal music, he studied violin, organ and clavichord (forerunner of the piano). It was while at Luneburg that he made several journeys on foot to Hamburg to hear Reinken and other famous Organists.

In 1703 Bach went to Weimer as violinist in the Court Orchestra of Prince Johann Ernst. We cannot follow him in this sketch through all the events of his life, but as teacher, organist and composer, he left his impress upon his time and gradually developed into the great master whose fame and work are epoch-making in the splendor of achievement, and their effect upon the course of musical history.

In 1723 Bach was appointed cantor of the famous Thomas School at Leipsic, which position he held until his death, in spite of many discouragements and much annoyance. His one solace was his delightful home life. Bach was twice married and the father of twenty children, some of whom developed great musical talent.

His works were greatly neglected until Mendelssohn revived them by bringing out the *Passion Music* at Berlin in 1829. It is said that Bach's equal as an organist never existed. He fixed the system of equal temperament which has made modern music possible, and, in fact, there was nothing which pertains to the art of music in which Bach was not a consummate master.

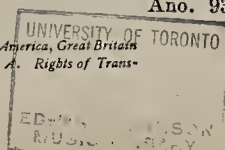
He composed an immense quantity of music for the church, for the organ, violin and clavichord, and various other instruments, besides his celebrated *Passion Music* (so-called because the words are from the New Testament account of the passion of Christ), and the celebrated Mass in B-minor. The "*Well-Tempered Clavier*," containing the forty-eight Preludes and Fugues, is indispensable to the pianist, and all his work shows the most consummate mastery of the resources of musical art.

FORM AND STRUCTURE.—The Bourrée. The first ten measures of this piece are an extended period.

The first section closes in measure 4; the second section in measure 10. The first eight measures after the double bar are a complete period closing in the key of the relative minor, E. The next period, beginning in measure 19, continues to the end of the piece. In accordance with Bach's general practice in music of this kind, the third period in the piece is not like the opening period, but is built upon motives taken from it. The piece, therefore, in our opinion, is a very perfect specimen of the three-part song form. There should be absolutely no reason why the third period should be exactly like the first, and if sufficient unity is present in the composition to show that the third part is a completion of the idea, it can be as free and elaborate as the composer wishes to make it. It depends, as just stated, upon unity. This unity is obtained by identity of melodic fragments and also by the use of cadences. As we state later in the Lessons, cadences have the very important office of providing for the entrance of the music that follows, and only the final cadence of a division or more especially of a piece has the office of bringing the music to a real close.

The Loure. The first eight measures of the Loure are an open period ending on the dominant. The second period begins at measure 39 and closes with measure 46. The unity is here obtained by means of thematic work, that is to say, the use of fragments of melody taken from the first period.

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The Gigue. A better way of understanding this piece than to attempt to reduce it to one of the modern forms, is to take the subject, which is three measures in length, and follow it through. It appears first in measures 47, 48 and 49. It then appears again in the left hand part of measures 50, 51 and 52. Then again in measures 53, 54 and 55, where practically the first period comes to a close in the key of G. The following measures down to measure 60 are simply developments of fragments of the motive. The second half of measure 60 has the original theme, and again measure 66, middle part, the continuation in measure 67 being in the upper voice. Finally, the period closes in measure 70. In measure 71 a free inversion of the theme appears. This is thrown backward and forward between the different parts and finally leads to a close in the key of the tonic in measure 102.

HOW TO STUDY.—The Bourrée is not of great difficulty technically, and is much nearer the modern form of melody with accompaniment than most of Bach's works. The melody runs along largely in the right hand part with an accompaniment in figured chords for the left hand. The piece should, therefore, be examined in the light of the use of melodic fragments or motives for building up a continuous melody. The motives are very transparent and can easily be identified by the pupil for himself. The trill in measure 5 and elsewhere, including the two sixteenth-notes, should consist of eight sixteenth-notes, beginning the trill with the auxiliary note, that is to say, the beat of the trill is repeated three times and then the concluding notes are played, making two groups of four sixteenth-notes each.

The Loure. This piece is, as we remarked also of the Sarabande in this Suite, of an appealing aria-like quality, extremely expressive. The chief feature about this composition will be to play it in such a manner that all the melodies may be distinctly heard; that is, it should be a fabric containing threads of different colors, and the ear should be able to distinguish these different melodic threads exactly as the eye is able to perceive the different colors in a piece of woven cloth; the only difference being that an impression received through the ear is more intimate and profound than an impression received through the eye, at least with most people this is the case.

The student should carefully note the peculiar rhythmic forms in this piece, and, of course, in this connection, be very careful that the time is correctly rendered. Then the proper touch should be applied so that the different melodies should stand out in accordance with our suggestion above; when the whole piece can be played so that the structure is clear and very expressive, the student will have accomplished his task.

The final number of this Suite is the Gigue. In taking up the practice of this piece we recommend the use of devices which are applicable to triplets. The piece must be played with mechanical perfection and the delivery of the slurs and *staccato* notes must be very clear. Observing all the marks of expression which have been inserted here will give the correct rendering of this piece. It will be a most delightful recreation for the student to be able to render this piece well because it dances along in a spirit of unbridled hilarity. This is a good place to remark that the numbers contained in this Suite, which are so extremely varied in their emotional characters, show the tremendous emotional range which the genius of this great master commanded. He could be solemn and serious, religious, humorous, or bubble over with fun as occasion demanded. Therefore, learn to love the music of this great composer.

French Suite.

Nº 5.

Allegro moderato. $\text{♩} = 72$

Bourrée.

Measures 1, 2, 3. Dynamics: *f*, *meno f*.

Measures 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Dynamics: *f*, *p*, *cresc.*

Measures 9, 10, 11, 12. Dynamics: *mf dolce*.

Measures 13, 14, 15, 16. Dynamics: *p*, *cresc.*

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f 17 *p dolce* 18 19 20 21

cresc. 22 23 24 25 *poco f*

p 26 *crescendo* 27 *f* 28 29 30 *poco riten*

Moderato $\text{♩} = 92$
 Loure. *p dolce con grazia* 31 32 33

mf *cresc.* *poco f* *espr.* 34 35 36

37 *dimin.* *pp* 38 *p* 39 *espr.* 40 *cresc.*

41 *piu espr.* 42 *dim.* 43 *ben cantando*

44 *cresc.* *poco f* *dim.* 45 46

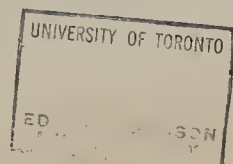
Gigue. *Allegro molto.* $\text{♩} = 128$

p *con delicatezza* 47 48 *non crescendo* 49 *pp*

50 51 52 *poco cresc.* *p* 53

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ten.
 54 *ten.*
 55 *poco più cresc.*
 56
 57
 58 *poco f*
 59
 60 *p*
 61
 62 *cantando*
 63 *con espressione*
 64 *p*
 65
 66
 67
 68 *cresc.*
 69
 70 *f*

71 *p* *cresc.* 72 73 *p* 74

poco cresc. 75 76 *piu espr. ma dolce* 77

78 *p* 79 80 *cresc.*

81 82 83 *p*

84 *p* *cresc.* 85 86 *cresc.*

87 88 89

f *dim.*

90 91 92

p *poco cresc.* *r. h. dolce*

93 94 95

non cresc. *dim.*

96 97 98

pp *p*

99 100 101 102

cresc. *poco rit.*

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